

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

The Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With
William A. "Bill" Campbell
Clinton, MA
January 22, 2013
466th Bomb Group
784th Bomb Squadron
Tail Gunner B-24

My name is Richard Misenhimer: Today is January 22, 2013. I am interviewing Mr. William A. “Bill” Campbell by telephone. His phone number is 978-368-8864. His address is 421 Wilson Street, Apt. #2, Clinton, MA 01510. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research Center for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Bill, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah, all right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II. Now, the first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the museum. So let me read this to you. (agreement read) Is that OK with you?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the next thing I’d like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out that sometimes several years down the road, we try to get back in contact with a veteran, he’s moved or something. So do you have a son or daughter or some one we could contact if we needed to, to find you?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Who is that?

Mr. Campbell:

My brother.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Your brother??

Mr. Campbell:

Harry Campbell.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you have his phone number?

Mr. Campbell:

239-834-1379.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What town is that?

Mr. Campbell:

That's in Ft. Myers, Florida.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What is your birth date?

Mr. Campbell:

My birth date is January 30, 1925.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you born?

Mr. Campbell:

Somerville, MA.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mr. Campbell:

I just had two brothers, one's dead.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The one that passed away, was he in World War II?

Mr. Campbell:

No, no. He was in the service after World War II. He was on an aircraft carrier.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On December 7, 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you?

Mr. Campbell:

I was in Somerville. At that time I was only a kid.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were you doing when you heard about it?

Mr. Campbell:

A little excited about it. Like I say I was in school at that time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you heard that, how did you think it would affect you?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, like I say, I wasn't eighteen at the time so it wouldn't affect me. I didn't go into the service until I was eighteen...when I turned eighteen I went into the service.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What date was that?

Mr. Campbell:

It was in March of 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Campbell:

On the Depression? It didn't affect us much. Everybody in the house was working. There were four people in the house working. My grandfather was a motion picture operator, my aunt was a math teacher and a supervisor in the school of the Cambridge schools and my father was an engineer.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So everybody was able to keep working during the Depression then?

Mr. Campbell:

My father, way back in those days, he went to engineering school in Chicago and he opened up the first radio station in Boston in the early '30s. Then when the Depression came, he went out of business and he had to go take odd jobs here and there to keep going but he always found something to do.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you all have a garden?

Mr. Campbell:

We had a garden in the back of the house.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you went into the service, you went into the Army. Is that right?

Mr. Campbell:

At that time I was going to New England Air Craft. I always wanted to go to an aircraft school. It was at the East Boston Airport at that time in Boston. I took the engine course. Then when I was there they were training Army people there to be an aircraft mechanic. I was seventeen at the time and I said my father's paying me to go. I'm eighteen so I went into the service. I went into the Army barracks and enlisted and they sent me down to Miami Beach for training and after that they sent me up to Seymour Johnson Field in North Carolina for being an aircraft mechanic.

After that they wanted to know...I was always interested in aviation and then they said, "We want some people to fly." So I volunteered for that and they sent me down to Ft. Myers for aerial gunnery school and I finished that and after that I went to Salt Lake City and then they sent me to gunnery out there and then they sent me to Boise, in Idaho. That's a base there. Then we formed a crew there, a B-24 crew. I didn't know where I was going to go, the Pacific or the European theater you know until the last minute. That's where we finished. We had training there you know for flying, aerial gunnery, everything there. Then when we finished that we went to Topeka, Kansas and then we picked up a plane at Topeka, Kansas to take overseas. So we went from Topeka, Kansas, to Grenna Field in New Hampshire. Just for a day it took us and then we went up to Goose Bay, Labrador and we stayed there. The weather was terrible. Couple of days until everything went down. Then we flew from Goose Bay, Labrador to Norden Island. That was in May of 1944. Then from there we took a ferry over and we went to Norwich. First place

we went to was Attlebridge and we flew six missions out of there and then afterwards they wanted my pilot to go to the 44th Group and train as the radar lead crew. We went there and we had lessons and everything and then after a couple of weeks, we got transferred to the 466th Group and that's where we stayed as the lead crew. That was it as far as you know, the base. I left there in the beginning of February of 1945 to come back to the States.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Let me ask you about your experiences over there. Now you were in the 466th Bomb Group. What Bomb Squadron were you in?

Mr. Campbell:

The 784th. That was the lead squadron.

Mr. Misenhimer:

466th Bomb Group, 784th Bomb Squadron.

Mr. Campbell:

Right, right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you get to be a tail gunner?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, actually I'm listed on the M.O. as Engineer Gunner. I went through Aircraft Mechanic School. When they picked them out at Boise, that's when I was assigned as a tail, the other fellow, he was an Engineer Gunner. He was older than I was. They made him an actual Engineer Gunner, up in the top turret. That's over all the work, transferring the gas and the different things. So I was assigned to be a tail gunner and that's where I stayed.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you like being a tail gunner?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, the tail gunner was...when you're out there, it was nice. I just couldn't see the ball turret. It was awful cramped in that. I'd get a funny feeling being down there. You know, it's not a nice feeling. Tail gunner, you could see everything that's going on.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your first mission?

Mr. Campbell:

Trying to think...

Mr. Misenhimer:

What would you consider your worst mission?

Mr. Campbell:

October 12, 1944, Columbus Day. That's when I got hit with flak.

Mr. Misenhimer:

OK, tell me about that.

Mr. Campbell:

Well, they were on a mission to Osnabrueck, Germany. The marshalling yards there. The flak was coming up and the plane behind me took a direct hit in the bomb bay and he went right down. I could just see everything right there in back of me. I was flying on the upper over me because we were the lead crew and they got hit and all of a sudden you could see a parachute coming down by my tail turret and the other ship just behind just crumbled and it went down and everybody was dead. So when I got hit, then I called the pilot that I got hit so they came and pulled me out

of the tail tower, brought me up to the bulkhead and they injected me with morphine and that's where I stayed. Then we landed and they took me to the hospital. There were mission hospitals over there. Not too far from Attlebridge. That was the Air Force hospital. I was there I would say about a couple of months. I went back to flying and they told me at that time when you get back to the States, they didn't want to take the flak...they took it out of the behind. I got hit in the behind in the right. They got that out but the other came through the groin and they didn't want to go in there. They wanted the flak to work its way out and you get that done in the States. So after I finished my missions, like I say, we had a lot of close calls.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were some other close calls?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, we got hit in the bomb bay and everything was broken and everything...my pilot kept on going til we reached the target and came back. You know get the fire extinguishers out and everything just battled it and then we came back and he got the Distinguished Flying Cross for that. Instead of dropping out we stayed with it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the flak that hit you when you were in the tail turret, where did that come in at?

Mr. Campbell:

It came up and it hit me in the behind. And it came on into the groin. That's why when I got back to the States they sent me down to Atlantic City some place and they sent me up to Plattsburg, New York to the Air Force hospital up there and I was up there you know, rehab and everything else for three months or more.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On your missions, how many times was your plane damaged?

Mr. Campbell:

That's hard...we had a lot of...nothing serious.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It was damaged several times, right?

Mr. Campbell:

We were hit a number of times but nothing that stopped everything.

Mr. Misenhimer:

OK. Were you attacked by German fighters?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever shoot any down?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, we shot at some of them. I don't know if I got them or not. Everybody was shooting, know what I mean? All of us, a lot of guns. It was pretty hard to prove anything. Right there on you and nobody else, you know. There were planes in back of us too.

Mr. Misenhimer:

In your tail turret, did you have a single or twin 50s?

Mr. Campbell:

Two barrels, twin.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever lose an engine at any time?

Mr. Campbell:

We had a few cases, yes where we had to feather it, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that?

Mr. Campbell:

Coming back we had to slow down some.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have to drop out of formation?

Mr. Campbell:

Not that I know of.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you were attacked by the German fighters, did they hit your plane quite a bit?

Mr. Campbell:

No, we were lucky.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What day was your last mission?

Mr. Campbell:

I would say December 30, 1944.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many total missions did you fly?

Mr. Campbell:

Let's see...I had 27 because I had some with the 458th and then we got transferred to the 44th and then we got transferred to the 466th and I finished all my missions with the 466th.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You flew 27 total?

Mr. Campbell:

Altogether, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were some of the places you bombed?

Mr. Campbell:

Munich, Hamburg, I'd have to go get my thing on the missions.

Mr. Misenhimer:

OK. Did you ever bomb Berlin?

Mr. Campbell:

No, I wanted to. When I got there I wanted to go on the Berlin ones but they were gonna fly the 466th but we never went. We went up to Stratten, way up, and Munich.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about Ploesti or any of those?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, no. That's down in Romania. The 15th Air Force went down there. One time, that's a long way.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things you remember about your time over there?

Mr. Campbell:

I went on a gas mission.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's that?

Mr. Campbell:

We got to load up the B-24 up with gas to bring over to Patton's army. I was glad I went on that. It was a quite interesting trip. We were flying low and going over France. You could see all the trenches and it was kind of dangerous because the Germans, if there were any around, would shoot you at the low, low altitude. We got to the town there and it was a Luftwaffe base and then the 9th Air Force was taking it over. That's where we landed and then we went into the town there and stayed the night at the hotel and we got a lot of souvenirs and everything because we brought our cigarettes with us. Then we just flew back. It was quite interesting.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Why were you flying low?

Mr. Campbell:

Very low.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Why were you doing that?

Mr. Campbell:

Didn't have to wear oxygen masks. We were low. Supposed to be more or less the French the way we went was more or less in control. A little way further in if we went, the Germans were there but we weren't around where the Germans were.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I see. Now you called that a gas mission. What did you mean by a gas mission?

Mr. Campbell:

We didn't get credit for it or anything but it could be dangerous. All it would take was a spark and the whole plane would blow up like a big bomb what with the gas or something.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did your bomb squadron lose quite a few planes?

Mr. Campbell:

Yep.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many, do you know?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, I don't know off hand.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you see quite a few of them shot down?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, yes, yes, God yes. I used to be in the tail. We'd have a command pilot that would be a General, you know, and the pilot was a real... I had to report to him everything I saw in the back, all these horror stories, you know, and they'd ask you "How many planes went down?" "How many parachutes went down?" Like that, because I saw everything in back. I used to report what was going on.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you were in England, did you get a chance to go to London or any place like that?

Mr. Campbell:

I got a pass to go down to London. When I got down to London, looked around, and I said, "I'm going to take the Flying Scotsman, the train, and go up to Edinburgh." That's where my ancestors came from. I went up there in August and at Edinburgh they had the...

Mr. Misenhimer:

The military tattoo?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah, we saw the military tattoo, right in the castle. We went through the castle and the American Red Cross up there. We had a good time up there. Met some girls. We had a ball up there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

In August?

Mr. Campbell:

1944. That's when they have it. The Princess Gardens there. It was beautiful up there. Boy, I'll tell you. Went all over the place, you know. I got invited to a Scottish house. I had dinner. It was quite a thing. Most of the people, a lot of them were in the Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer:

People were very friendly, were they?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, how about the buzz bombs. Did you ever see any of the buzz bombs?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes, yes, yes. The buzz bombs a few of them yes. They came towards Norwich, different places. Not too many. When I was down in England there, one of those big V...

Mr. Misenhimer:

The V-2s?

Mr. Campbell:

V-2 came in.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh, man.

Mr. Campbell:

I just said I'm glad I'm getting out of London. Edinburgh, they were way up, they didn't get hit bad at all. London and Birmingham and all those places they just bought it. Norwich, there was some bombing but not as much. London got hit the worst. Wasn't a good place to stay, that's for sure.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about the British pubs? Did you go to the pubs?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, yeah. All the time. We had beer on the base, too. I used to take my bike and go down to the little village and I used to get...I liked the fish and chips there. They put them in a big newspaper and I used to bring them back to the barracks. I'd bring back a lot of them and the other guys, put them on the stove, you know, and heat them up a little. We used to go to the mess hall at night and sit in the mess hall at night and say "You got some corn willy, you got any...you know, food here." You know, not canned, leftovers, things like that. We'd appreciate it. So they gave it to us and we'd bring it back to the barracks. They were pretty good that way. Only thing that we did

there, taking our shower where we were, it was cold water. You'd get into a cold tub, it was not too good. When I was at Norwich, they had...it was modernized, more or less. It was an RAF base and when I was at Norwich we lived in houses, two-floor houses. We had a nice room but coming out of a beautiful house when we got to Attlebridge then we had a mission hut. A big difference. They had a lot going at Norwich and it was close, walk out the door, you were not too far from the city.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The food on the base wasn't too good, huh?

Mr. Campbell:

It was the same old stuff. We used to call it shit on a shingle we used to call it, that was corn willy, and the eggs, forget about it, powdered eggs. What we used to do was go out and see a farm, buy some eggs from them, bring them back to the barracks and cook some eggs.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What rank did you have when you were there?

Mr. Campbell:

I was Staff Sergeant.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did your plane ever get close to being shot down?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, we were very lucky in certain cases, yes. Sometimes it was the engines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Other than the time you were wounded, what would be another bad mission?

Mr. Campbell:

Got hit down in the bomb bay there, that was close. It could have gone up but we were just lucky.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you got hit in the bomb bay before you dropped your bombs, right?

Mr. Campbell:

We had them on.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, before you dropped them. Now let me go back and ask you about your basic training. How was that when you took that down in Florida?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, basic training outside of Miami?

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, that was nice. We were right in a hotel. You couldn't ask for better. You'd look out the window and see, you know. At night time you had free time, you'd go any place, different places. Nice fresh orange juice. So all kinds of places there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You weren't restricted to the hotel then?

Mr. Campbell:

No, we just went out at night.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all did you do in basic training?

Mr. Campbell:

Just calisthenics and we used to march down by the river and back to the hotel and then you could go swimming but I never went swimming because down there they had these man-o-wars. People were going in there and getting bit. So I never dared to go into the water.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have a lot of marching?

Mr. Campbell:

They had a pool but that was only for the visitors, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have a lot of marching?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, yes, yes, yes. Down in Miami we were marching all over the place. You know, out in the golf course was where we ran and did all the calisthenics, different things like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any kind of weapons training?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes, we had weapons training, too.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind did you have? A rifle?

Mr. Campbell:

We used the 45 and after basic training there wasn't too much...

Mr. Misenhimer:

It wasn't infantry training, right?

Mr. Campbell:

Wasn't too much at the Miami Beach. It wasn't until we went to...then we had to do with guns or anything at Ft. Myers. That's where we had all our gun training in the 45 and the rifle.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now during your basic training at Miami Beach down there, were your drill instructors pretty rough on you?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, they were pretty good. They weren't bad. No problems.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where was it you took your gunnery training?

Mr. Campbell:

At Ft. Myers, Florida.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And how was that?

Mr. Campbell:

That was good. It was all built on swamp. You'd come in to the barracks and then you'd hear "crunch, crunch" all the cockroaches. They were into everything. They were loaded with cockroaches. Up in back there they weren't but at Ft. Myers was like. A place where they had an airfield there and they have places where the planes drop all those chemicals to get rid of the insects.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what all did you do in your gunnery training?

Mr. Campbell:

We used to fly and then they'd tow targets and the tracer bullets you know they could tell if you hit it or not from the tower or the bullets you know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They had different colors on them.

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah. Then we had the screens with the machine guns and they shot rays and that's how they judged you, how you did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of plane were you flying in?

Mr. Campbell:

I had a B-17, an AT-10. I think that was a lot of fun. You know you'd be sitting in the back and then the pilot had some fun and all of a sudden you'd start diving, going down, scare the hell out of you. You got used to that after a while but you'd be out in that back cockpit you know and all of a sudden you'd take a dive so you really felt it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things that happened in your training?

Mr. Campbell:

Not too much, you know. Like I say, taking the machine gun apart, you know, blindfolded.

Things like that. Then getting to know what to do when in the turret because it was hydraulics, some were electric and some were hydraulic.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you came back to the States in February of 1945, right?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you come back?

Mr. Campbell:

I came back on the Coast Guard it was a former Pacific ocean liner, like the Manhattan or something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oceanliner?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah, like the Manhattan or something like that. They called it the Coast Guard The Wakefield.

We left from Liverpool and I came into Boston Harbor. I was glad of that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got back to the States, what did you do?

Mr. Campbell:

I got back to the States and I was sent to Camp Mile Standish to get processed and then they sent me to Fort Devons and from there I got a pass to go home. Then I got a week off and then I had to report to Atlantic City, New Jersey for processing.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Campbell:

Then when I was down there I was there a couple of weeks and I went into New York alone, down to the Steel Pier down there and that's Joe DiMaggio down at the Steel Pier and then went

into New York around to different places like The Latin Quarter. Then when I got back to Atlantic City they processed me and sent me up to Plattsburg, New York, to the hospital up there. I was up there for three months.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all did they do there at the hospital?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, we played basketball and I had Donald O'Connor the movie actor and what's his name? We went fishing and then we had a boat that was on Lake Champlain, took a little boat out and of course it was a nice city...

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did they do to you in the hospital?

Mr. Campbell:

They just looked at us and making a decision when they were ready to operate. So every weekend they sent me, I could go home on a Friday and come back on Monday morning. So I did that and I used to hitchhike a lot. At that time I'd get out on the road and I used to hitchhike down to where I lived. At first I took a train up and that was a pain in the neck, going back by train. Then I met a fellow that lived not too far from me and then he started picking me up and I'd take a train from Cambridge up to Pittsburgh. He lived in Pittsburgh, he'd pick me up and we drove all night and went up to Plattsburg. Coming home, he left earlier than we did. We didn't have the pass to go home earlier. Then I hitchhiked. I always got a ride back with him so I made out.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did they finally operate on you?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes. When the time was ready when they felt they could go in there without disturbing anything and took the rest of the flak out. I was there and after that they sent me down to Greensborough in North Carolina. They said while I was down there while we're down here then they were talking about some one was spreading a rumor they were going to take you and send you to B-29s. That was the rumor. You were going to go to 29s. I said, "That can't be possible." It was just a rumor." At that time they had a point system. If you had so many points you could get out of the service. Well, I had enough points. Then they discharged me and I went back to Devons to get discharged.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What date was that?

Mr. Campbell:

At Fort Devons in Massachusetts.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What date was it?

Mr. Campbell:

July 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

July 1945?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got out, what did you do?

Mr. Campbell:

At that time my father had a radio store again and I went down to help him and everything. I started a hobby shop in the place, you know, airplanes and things. Getting sick of that and then all of a sudden...

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went down to General Electric and what happened?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, I got a job in the jet engine division. At the time they were just starting to build the big General Electrics. I was there about eight years. Anyway later on they moved out to...I used to work on stress tests and everything. It was just strip them down and see how the parts got worn or not, things like that. Very interesting. Turbo-props and we had the regular ones. Finally things settled down and they moved the plant out to Lockland, Ohio and at that time my wife didn't want to go because her mother was not well. So I couldn't take the job. If I went up there most likely I might have got a supervisor's job up there. I was there when they were just starting out. So I had to go get another job.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was that job?

Mr. Campbell:

I started another job, working on X-ray equipment. Building X-ray equipment.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now I want to go back and ask you some questions. When you got out of the service, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, no, no. There was no problem.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah, I had a 38 pistol.

Mr. Misenhimer:

P-38, OK.

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah, yeah. That's about all the souvenirs. I had a French flag.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever see any USO shows anywhere?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any big names?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, one thing we had at the base, we had Glenn Miller. That was great. He's on the base, Glenn Miller, before he went down on the plane and disappeared on the plane. My pilot that went down to London with the B-24 and picked him up. He didn't like to fly, Glenn Miller. He didn't care to fly.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah, we used to get the Red Cross at night time and had coffee and cookies and things like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did they ever charge you for them?

Mr. Campbell:

I'm trying to think. I didn't get charged, no. They were pretty good that way.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you were overseas, did you ever hear Axis Sally on the radio?

Mr. Campbell:

Yep, yeah, oh yeah. Heard her all the time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you think of her?

Mr. Campbell:

(laughs) She was all right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you think of the officers you had over you, not your pilot but the other officers above you. What did you think of them?

Mr. Campbell:

They were a nice bunch. They were all different religions, Catholic, protestant, Jewish and Mormon. You know when they picked the crew I don't know how they go about it but this happened to be all different.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you think those upper officers knew their jobs?

Mr. Campbell:

I would say they were pretty good, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now on April 12, 1945 when President Roosevelt died, what did people think about that?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, he had been sick. I liked Roosevelt all right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did people feel bad about it or what reaction did people have when they heard that?

Mr. Campbell:

I would say, you know, they felt bad about it but he did a good job during the war.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the morale in your outfit overseas?

Mr. Campbell:

I would say it was pretty good.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now on May 8, 1945 when Germany surrendered. Did you have a celebration then?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, I was home in February 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, I know, you were back in this country when it happened.

Mr. Campbell:

We had a celebration, sure.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then when they dropped the first atomic bomb on April 6 what did you think of that?

Mr. Campbell:

Oh, that was good. I happened to be in the movie theater that day. I was watching John L. Lewis.

Then we heard outside the movie theater all these honks and things, that was in Boston. We all came out and then I went to the American Legion that night and we had quite a party.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was when Japan surrendered?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you use your G.I. Bill for anything?

Mr. Campbell:

I took some engineering courses.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes. I've been going to reunions for years now. Oh, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

See a lot of people you knew there?

Mr. Campbell:

Yes. Our reunions, I didn't start getting into the Bomb Group reunions. When I got back I was working all the time, around the clock and I didn't start going to the Bomb Group until

about... started there in Massachusetts around 1990. I belonged but I didn't go because I didn't have the time to go because I was working. Then later on when I retired I really had the time to do these things. I retired in 1990. Then I had the time. Before, I was working, I couldn't take a week off. Every year I was going to a reunion a year, Second Air Division and the 466th, we had a separate reunion. Then the national. Sometimes three reunions a year. Now it's down to one, the 466th, the national, and I haven't been going to the 2nd Air Division, they went out of business.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were the 8th Air Force, right?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They've had reunions, haven't they?

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah. But they had their last one. They have a heritage league. I don't know what they're going to do but that consists of B-24s. I don't know what they're going to do. The only place they can come back to is the 8th Air Force reunion, the 24s and the 17s. Still having their own. They don't come to the national. I was just overseas in England to the Attlebridge Base. I was over there a good week.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you been back to England several times since the war?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, I only went once. Just this week in May and June I went there. Had a good time. I'm hoping to go again. A lot of nice people.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Campbell:

I guess the Purple Heart, I got the Air Medal, four Oak Leaf clusters, all the other medals, European Theater with six stars and the rest of them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did the Air Force give Battle Stars?

Mr. Campbell:

They had Oak Leaf Clusters that's another medal.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They had medals and the Oak Leaf Clusters, right.

Mr. Campbell:

Right, right. Each six missions. You have to have six missions for each one.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Six missions for the Air Medal and then each six missions they added an Oak Leaf Cluster, right.

Mr. Campbell:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you continue to fly after you got out?

Mr. Campbell:

Well, I was in the Air Force Reserve.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh, were you?

Mr. Campbell:

I used to go down to Hanscomb Field and there was a troop carrier come in and I used to go down there and work on the plane with the mechanic.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long did you stay in the Reserve?

Mr. Campbell:

I was in the Reserves for three years. I did start working full time. One time we had you know things were not too many jobs at the factory and I said I'll go in the Reserves. I wanted to work at the base terminal and I was down there you know doing engine work.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is there anything else you recall from your time in World War II? Well, Bill, again thank you for your time today and thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. Campbell:

OK. Like I say, right now, I've got an awful cold and I got that hearing aid lately and it drives me crazy.

End of Interview

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